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SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 23-MARCH 20, 2009 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

REF: A. (A) 2008 STATE 21247
 1B. (B) 2008 STATE 30936

¶1. (SBU) The annual substantive session of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (the C-34) will be held February 23 to March 20. We have reviewed the 2008 C-34 report (A/62/19), as well as the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 session (A/63/615 and A/63/615/Add.1). Canada chairs the working group, and will produce the first draft of the 2009 C-34 report. The top U.S. priorities for this session are strengthening UN police capacities and supporting development of doctrine and guidance to implement mandates and improve performance. Overall guidance for the C-34 session is contained in paragraph 3. You may draw on the points in paragraph 2 for inclusion in the U.S. opening statement as well as for your discussions with other missions and the UN. USUN should also use this cable as the basis for discussions during the C-34 session; updated and additional guidance will be provided as necessary.

¶2. (SBU) Begin points for opening statement:

--The United States thanks the Chair and members of the Bureau for their work in organizing these meetings. We also would like to thank the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Under-Secretary General for Field Support, the hard-working members of the Secretariat, and the many brave and dedicated men and women who serve as military, police and civilian peacekeepers around the world.

--For almost a decade, there has been a steadily growing demand for peacekeeping operations to support international efforts to restore peace and stability in conflict-torn regions of the world. The 140,000 peacekeepers serving in 18 missions have complex responsibilities and are working in very challenging environments.

--The U.S. is proud to be taking a leading role in helping to build capacity for peacekeeping, particularly with regard to military and police programs. We look forward to exploring, during this meeting and on a continuing basis, the development and expansion of partnerships across the board with supporters of peacekeeping to respond to critical and emerging needs.

--We also recognize the international community must give careful attention to the resources available and the context in which peacekeepers are operating, so that we collectively are making the best use possible of UN peacekeeping to support sustainable peace.

--Over the past two years, we as a group have supported

the Secretary-General's recommendations for a radical restructuring and strengthening of the entire spectrum of UN peacekeeping operations.

--The U.S. welcomes the substantial progress that has been made on filling positions created as part of the restructuring of DPKO and creation of DFS, and the strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs. We hail the strides being made in institutionalizing these critical changes in approach.

-- We look forward to seeing the fruits of this restructuring and strengthening across the board, with greater speed and consistently high quality product and performance at every stage, from planning to deployment, to continued support in the field, and through mission exit strategies.

-- The U.S. welcomes the strategic review of the Police Division. This review follows naturally on last year's review and strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs, and recognizes the central role that UN police play in providing appropriate responses to civil unrest, a wide range of specialized contributions to peace operations, and critical mentoring, training and institution-building as societies make the transition to sustainable peace.

--It is clear the Police Division needs more capacity -- staff, planning, communications -- to carry out the job we are asking of it, and we look forward to a detailed review of specific proposals.

-- We also welcome the substantial progress made in building the Standing Police Capacity, and commend the detailed analysis provided by the Panel of Experts. The U.S. expresses broad support for the report's recommendations on improving flexibility, setting priorities, and building the Standing Police Capacity's ability to implement its core functions. We look forward to a more detailed discussion.

-- The U.S. would like to take this opportunity to commend the rapid production of an impressive volume of high-quality work being produced by DPKO/PET, including doctrine, guidance, and training materials. This office has stepped up very quickly to the challenges facing UN peacekeeping, and we look forward to continuing to work with them in future.

--The growing number of peacekeeping missions with mandates for protection of civilians is posing a challenge for staff in the field to implement. We believe development of clear doctrine and guidance for missions is critical.

-- We continue to be concerned about indications the integrated operational teams (IOTs) are variably successful, with some IOTs operating very well, and others still not fully clear on their role or relationships. This connection across Departments is a key element in improving communication between headquarters and the field, and we hope to see progress in the year ahead.

--We are also concerned about continuing shortfalls in finding personnel in all categories for missions in the field, and look forward to working with the rest of the Committee and with the Secretariat to find solutions.

--We as Members should take note of the efforts we have made collectively to establish and improve the UN's systems for reporting and addressing the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. We must all ensure we do our part by holding our own peacekeepers accountable.

--As a group over the past several years, we have generated a range of tools designed to address various

aspects of this issue, including the Victims' Assistance Strategy and the Model Memorandum of Understanding. There are now training requirements and reporting procedures for all missions, and we are encouraged to see that progress is being made in creating an atmosphere where women and children are more willing to report abuses.

--We look forward to the resumed discussion of Legal Experts later this year on holding UN civilian staff and experts on mission accountable for misconduct. The United States shares the expectation of its colleagues on this Committee that Member States will take appropriate action against those who have committed abuses.

-- During the spring of 2009 the General Assembly will review a comprehensive report on the welfare and recreation needs of all categories of peacekeeping personnel, as called for in the 2008 report of this committee. We share the concern of our colleagues that adequate provision be made in this regard.

-- The U.S. welcomes the steps taken during 2008 to improve and clarify security procedures across the board. The safety and well-being of UN personnel operating in often dangerous places is of prime concern to us all.

End points.

13. (U) USUN's starting point for discussion is the 2008 report, which is consensus language. We will work with you as in previous years to review all proposed edits. While there is a long list of topics likely to be considered, much of it is well-travelled ground. USUN should concentrate U.S. efforts in the 2009 C-34 session on ensuring the report supports the following, in order of priority:

--Strengthening of the Police Division and Standing Police Capacity. We note both the December 10, 2008 "Comprehensive Analysis of the Police Division" and the Panel of Experts' report on the Standing Policy Capacity (A/63/630) contain specific resource and organizational recommendations. The U.S. delegation should seek to have the report express strong support in general terms for strengthening UN policing, with specific details on budget and management to be addressed by the ACABQ and Fifth Committee. The focus should be to endorse police strengthening in terms of adequate staffing and other resources, enhanced planning capacity, expanded and improved doctrine, and improved organization, with the goal of speeding deployments and improving police services in the field. UN police responsibilities run from crowd control and individual specialized functions at one end of the spectrum to building police institutions, training and mentoring on the other end. The 2007 restructuring made the Police Division part of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, with the Police Advisor reporting to the Assistant Secretary-General heading that office. The 2008 C-34 report recommended giving the Police Advisor rank equivalent to the Military Advisor, with a reporting line to the Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. We understand there has been recent discussion among Police Experts at the various missions to the UN of whether this is an appropriate time to consider revisiting that arrangement, with the Police Advisor heading a stand-alone office (like the Office of Military Affairs) responsible for police force generation for traditional active policing functions, with the capacity/institution-building function retained by the Office of Rule of Law. The U.S. would want to see and review a specific proposal before making a final decision. Therefore, for the 2009 C-34 report, we would support a request for a review and recommendations from the Secretariat on revising the organization of police functions. The U.S. supports efforts to coordinate rule of law initiatives with efforts to improve police

capabilities, to ensure such programs are mutually reinforcing.

--Strong support for Secretariat development of doctrine, best practices, other procedural guidance: As noted above, we believe the new, energetic staff in DPKO/PET working on best practices and training is doing an excellent job. The U.S. should support language in the report reinforcing efforts to link best practices to updates of training materials, and to incorporate best practices and lessons learned into current operations quickly and affirmatively. As USUN is aware, some in the NAM in recent years have interpreted international efforts to protect civilians and address gross humanitarian violations as interference in internal affairs. In that context, several NAM members were successful in eliminating from the 2008 C-34 report a simple, short paragraph calling for development of doctrine on the protection of civilians. The U.S. continues to believe this doctrine is needed, particularly given the repeated request of field commanders for clear guidance on how to implement this responsibility (now included in the mandate of several missions). We understand DPKO/PET is working on a study in response to a request from DPKO and OCHA, but the U.S. believes a statement of support from the C-34 would demonstrate Member State support. USUN should work with other like-minded countries in seeking again to include such language in the 2009 report.

--Full implementation of the structural changes and staffing increases made since 2007 (including the Office of Military Affairs): as noted above, a number of changes (such as creation of integrated operational teams) have been made but are not necessarily fully or smoothly operational. This includes ensuring headquarters/field lines of communication are clear and functioning properly, planning offices are staffed and have the resources needed to speed mission planning and modification, and integrated mission planning is being used as a tool to eliminate duplication of effort and enhanced cooperation. The report should ask for an update from the Secretariat on these issues by next year.

--Enhancement of African peacekeeping capacities (which is an important U.S. policy goal). The U.S. has provided and will continue to provide support for African Union peacekeeping missions through direct bilateral support. We are concerned about resource implications, in particular any direct transfer of UN assessed peacekeeping funds, or assets funded by UN assessed peacekeeping funds, to organizations not under UN command and control, or accountable to the UN Security Council. The 2008 report and implementation reports, as well as UN Security Council Resolution 1809 (2008), do not endorse such resource transfers, but tread close to doing so. [Note: If pressed about USG support for UNSC Resolution 1863, which authorized the delivery of a UN logistics and support package to AMISOM, USUN should stress the support package was authorized at the time under extraordinarily unique circumstances, for a fixed and limited duration, only "with a view" towards incorporating AMISOM into a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia, and in light of the Council's expressed intent at that time to establish such an operation by separate vote. The USG maintains its opposition to the use of assessed UN funds to support non-UN organizations.] We support DPKO's African Union Peacekeeping Support Team's efforts in such areas as providing technical assistance to the African Union Secretariat to build its capacity to field peacekeeping operations, as well as assistance in linking African troop contributing countries with donors who could help train and equip African forces (such as through participation in the G8++ Africa Clearinghouse meetings).

--Endorsement of the concept of "cooperation with regional arrangements" (that is, regional groups other than the AU, in particular the EU). This process is making slow

progress, and is uncontroversial, since there are no major resource implications. In the context of both this topic and the question of enhancing African peacekeeping capacities, the U.S. welcomes discussion on how countries or entities with resources, skills and assets might better target their own programs and form partnerships to respond to critical and emerging needs. We also recognize that the international community must give careful attention to the resources available and the context in which peacekeepers are operating, to make the best use possible of this critical tool for sustainable peace.

--Encourage implementation of the new process to "recognize" training programs at the various national peacekeeping centers (a UN seal of approval, in effect). This should include discussion of whether distance-learning courses provided by UNITAR-POCI (which is no longer affiliated with the UN) will be recognized. The Secretariat should also be asked to report on how web-based training (which we recognize as an invaluable tool) will address pre-deployment and in-service training needs, as tasks and requirements evolve during the course of a mission.

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